

ESO spotlight

Education services officers are a vital link from the Institute to Coast Guard members at every unit, administering advancement testing and offering voluntary education services. Each edition of the *Campus News* highlights an ESO who has taken significant steps to improve the delivery of voluntary education services to his or her unit.

Kathy Nash **MLCA training and education manager**

MLC Atlantic's education services goal is to provide a duty station at which Coast Guard members can arrive with no post high school education and can leave with a master's degree.

Working with the the unit's education services officer, Ms. Nash has expanded MLC Atlantic's off-duty education programs to make this goal achievable.

"About a year ago, the Federal Women's Program began offering lunchtime Brown Bag University sessions, taught and administered by Tidewater Community College," Ms. Nash said. "We've enhanced that program and now have evening classes on base, provided by Averett College, leading to a bachelor of business administration degree."

Forty-three students from the command are enrolled in the current semester's three undergraduate courses provided by Averett College and Tidewater Community College, and, if enough command members enroll, Averett will begin offering an MBA program during the spring semester.

When the MLC began offering degree programs on base, a few potential students had a fear of passing the prerequisites for English courses. To prepare these students, the command offered business writing workshops, taught by Peter Stinson, an MLC staff member, who holds a bachelor's degree in English and an M.Ed. The course covers basic writing and composition skills, grammar, sentence structure and paragraphs.

"We have people of all ranks taking this English refresher course. Demand for the class

is so high, we're barely able to keep up with it," Ms. Nash said.

For information on the

Institute's voluntary education services, call the Institute's automated voice response system, (405) 954-7231.

One workshop graduate, PO Amber Goins, scored 99 percent and 98 percent on English and reading skills placement tests required for admission to the technical school she attends.

The command is in the process of creating a distance learning center, at which students will attend on-line Coast Guard "C" schools. The first course being offered is a resident mentoring course normally given at Training Center Yorktown.

"We're hoping to open the distance learning center — on a space-available basis — to Coast Guard members pursuing off-duty education, allowing them to use the center and its resources to help them complete their courses. That's our ultimate goal," she said.

In addition to her role as training and education manager, Ms. Nash also heads the Training Advisory Panel.

"This gives me input from various divisions within the command and allows me to brainstorm with panel members to explore alternatives for meeting our customers' training and education needs," she said. The board includes representatives from each division within the command who provide insights into command members' education and training needs and desires.

She said that the most important factor in creating and maintaining a successful program is determining MLC members' needs. "We do this by processing surveys and listening to concerns discussed at all levels of the organization. This is a team effort; one person cannot do it alone."